

Come Wright in

Grand opening Saturday

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After years of vacancy, and months of restoration, the Wright Building is ready to bustle with its rightful inhabitants.

On one side of the building visitors can hang out at trendy metal high tables, or green couches, watching flat-screen television sets, working on new computers or playing one of several table. Through an oval room visitors step back in time on the newly finished wooden floors of the Rural and Historical Society's Drew Library. Relaxing in the reading room under low desk lamps in front of the original black cypress great fireplace with pure marble encasing, watching the time pass on the golden Roman numeral face of the grandfather clock, or admire the carved wood-on décor and original natural gold leafing.

Saturday at 1 p.m. the town will mark the official opening of the newly renovated Wright building. Although the Student Union, which inhabits the right side of the Wright building, has been operating since the end of school last year, the ceremony will mark the grand opening of the Rural and Historical Society's Drew Library.

The celebration will include a brief ceremony, led by chairman of the selectmen Andre Martecchini, and speeches from various town officials and state representatives, as well as speakers from both the Rural and Historical Society and the

Student Union. After the ceremony the entire Wright building will be open to the public, and a small reception will take place on the building grounds.

Director of the Rural and Historical Society Patrick Browne said the restoration of the Drew library came as close as possible to the original library that once consumed the Wright building.

"What we did for this restoration was to put it back to the way it was originally," he said.

The original building was a gift from Georgiana Wright to the town of Duxbury in memory of her husband and three children. In the 1960s an addition was built and the entire building was modernized for that time period. The original fireplace was painted over with white paint and the floors were covered with tile and shag carpet. Part of the project involved restoring the original 1907 building to its original look, while at the same time creating a 2007 version of the 1960s wing for the student union. The entire building was also brought up to code and restored to maximize energy efficiency.

The library, which is separated into three main spaces, the archival room, reading room, and reception room in the middle, replicates the same three rooms in the original building. While the archival room preserves the history of

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STAFF PHOTO/ANDRIA FARRELL
Director of the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society Patrick Browne, and Kerry Durkin, stand in the new Drew Archive Library in front of a portrait of Georgiana Wright, who donated the Wright building to the town in 1907 in memory of her husband and three children.

Wright building officially opens on Saturday

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the town, the climate controlled room preserves the documents. The society was meticulous in trying to recreate the original library; they even have the same portrait of Georgiana Wright, on loan from the Duxbury Free Library, hanging in the reception room as it had once before. Browne is not clear on which wall it hung on exactly, but he does know it is in the right room.

Since the 2003 town meeting the Wright building has been the subject of at least one warrant article every year. In March of 2003 the first Wright Building article appeared when the Community Preservation Committee asked the town for \$50,000 to fund a historical survey of the building. The following year the Student Union Association submitted several articles for the town meeting warrant regarding the Wright Building.

In March of 2005, Director of Public Works Tom Daley was brought in to oversee the project. Architects Finegold, Alexander and Associates Inc., were hired to restore the building to its original form. Using historical documents and well-preserved photos, the architects were able to come as close to the original building as they could in every aspect of the restoration. They went into great detail from the molding, to the lighting fixtures and the painting. A paint specialist took samples of the original paint and replicated the color and then matched it throughout the building.

Finally, this past spring the leases for the building were signed and the new tenants were free to begin moving in.

Kerry Durkin of the historical society has begun cataloging the

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archival room for easy accessibility. She said she plans to have an on-line catalogue for people to use, however, she must first manually catalog the library.

"Volunteers who want to help catalogue the archives, through the computer or manually, are always welcome," she said. In fact with the student union next door, they are hoping for some cross-pollination with student work projects or school projects.

While Student Union Director Debby Jewell has held training courses and run summer programs since the end of the last school year, she is excited for the official opening to mark what has been a long five-year process. The success of the student union is already apparent with about 40 middle school students coming over in droves every day after school she said.

"It is heavily used by the middle school, the kids are here as soon as school ends, which we expected," she said. "The high school students have busy schedules between sports, jobs, and other activities."

Currently the middle school and high school alternate Friday

night activities, and share common areas and game areas, but the high school students have a separate lounge and later hours of use. In the next couple of months the student run café will be up and running. The café will also be an entrepreneur project for the students who will work with business owners to learn about buying foods, pricing material and stocking materials. The café will feature all natural foods smoothies, juice, and healthy items, Jewell said.

The official town grand opening ceremony of the Wright Building takes place Saturday Sept. 22, at 1 p.m. Following the ceremony the Wright Building will hold an open house until 5 p.m.



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The Rural and Historical Society restored the Drew Library in the newly renovated Wright Building to mirror the original 1907 library.